

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2003

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are deeply concerned by the Department of Education's May 30 formula adjustment action that would significantly decrease federal financial aid for millions of American families. Although we understand that the Department is expected to periodically adjust this formula, it used data that was more than three years old, reflecting an economic situation that is vastly different than the one our nation finds itself in today.

Allowing these changes to go into effect could seriously threaten the ability of working American families to send their children to college. By making a college education inaccessible to working class and middle class families, we compromise an essential piece of the American dream — the ability to provide for one's children the chance to build a successful future in today's economy.

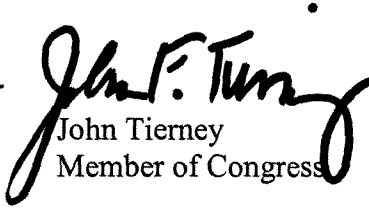
We strongly encourage you to suspend these changes, and instruct the Department to recalculate the formula using data that better reflects current economic conditions. This change should not have to be implemented through the legislative process, though we plan to introduce legislation to this effect if the Department does not take this action. Without this change, we allow middle class families to be caught in a bureaucratic glitch. All of us can agree that this is counter to our American values.

Tuition at state universities is skyrocketing, with some states seeing increases as high as 20 to 40 percent, and in-state tuition rising by an average of 12.5 percent. Higher education is becoming increasingly out of reach for the American middle class. The federal government should be working to counteract these disturbing trends, and we should certainly not permit an outdated formula to deprive students and their families of hundreds of millions of dollars of aid that they deserve.

Preventing this formula change is especially important given that 2005 is the last year that families can deduct \$4,000 from their income taxes for the cost of higher education. This change, coupled with the Department's formula adjustment, would make higher education significantly more expensive for American families over the next few years.

On behalf of millions of American families, please consider our request to withdraw this formula change, and prevent this unfair and unnecessary constraint on the accessibility of higher education in this country. Thank you, in advance, for your attention and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

		
George Miller	John Tierney	Rahm Emanuel
Ranking Member House	Member of Congress	Member of
Education and the		Congress
Workforce Committee		